

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 SUVA 01299 270417Z
ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7677
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, PINR, XP
SUBJECT: BANABA ISLAND TO BE STUDIED AGAIN

1. DR. MARAJ, VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC, TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED BY UK AND THE GILBERTS ISLANDS TO PERSONALLY HEAD A COMMISSION TO STUDY THE FUTURE OF BANABA (FORMERLY OCEAN) ISLAND. ALTHOUGH AWARE OF THE SENSITIVITY AROUND THE ISSUE OF BANABA'S STATUS AND THE RELATIVELY BLEAK PROSPECT FOR THE ISLAND ONCE THE PHOSPHATE DEPOSITS ARE EXHAUSTED IN THE RATHER NEAR FUTURE, MARAJ SAID HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT THIS ASSIGNMENT. HE FEELS THAT THIS IS PART OF THE USP ROLE IN THE AREA AND HE WELCOMES IT.

2. HE ADDED THAT FOR SOME REASON FIJI IS LAGGING BEHIND OTHER ISLANDS IN TAPPING THE USP RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL ADVICE OR ASSISTANCE. AN EXCEPTION WAS HIS RECENT APPOINTMENT BY GOF TO CHAIR A COMMISSION TO STUDY THE HEALTH SERVICES OF FIJI. INTERESTINGLY, A DOCTOR FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAS ALSO BEEN ASKED TO SERVE ON THIS COMMISSION.

3. COMMENT: WHILE DR. MARAJ IS RIGHT IN SEEING THE USP ROLE IN THE AREA IN A BROADER PERSPECTIVE THAN AS A MERE EDUCATIONAL
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INSTITUTION HIS ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH ASSIGNMENTS AS ABOVE IS INSPIRED ALSO BY THE OBVIOUS PROMINENCE HE IS ACCORDED THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH PACIFIC.
CONDON

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NNN

Message Attributes

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